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ABSTRACT

College instructors of English need to use selected strands from the educational psychology arena in teaching so that students may achieve more optimally. Each student needs to experience a quality English curriculum. A quality English class emphasizes instructional procedures which are conducive to achieving, growing, and learning on the part of students. Students need to perceive purpose in learning, so that they will accept reasons for attaining curricular objectives. Students need to be interested in acquiring vital English content. The instructor should guide each student to attach meaning to facts, concepts, and generalizations in ongoing lessons and units, through clear explanations, use of examples, responsiveness to student questions, quality order of ideas, and so on. Students must be encouraged to develop quality attitudes toward the English curriculum. The psychological approaches of behaviorism (with its precise, measurably stated objectives) and humanism (with heavy emphasis placed upon student decision-making and choices) can promote instructional goals. Higher levels of cognition, such as critical and creative thinking, as well as problem solving need adequate emphasis in ongoing lessons and courses. (SG)

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TEACHING COLLEGE ENGLISH

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College instructors of English need to use selected strands from the educational psychology arena in teaching so that students may achieve more optimally. Each student needs to experience a quality English curriculum. A quality English class emphasizes instructional procedures which are conducive to achieving, growing, and learning on the part of students. Schunk [1] wrote:

> One criterion for defining learning is behavioral change, or change in behavioral capacity. We use the label "learning" when a person becomes able to do or is capable of doing something different from what he could at an earlier point in time. Learning involves developing new behaviors or modifying existing ones. Student learning is assessed based on what students write, how they answer questions, what they verbalize, and so forth. The notion of a change in the capacity to behave in a new fashion is included in the definition because people may acquire knowledge without demonstrating it when learning occurs. Observational learning is an important type of learning.

Purposeful Subject Matter

Students need to perceive purpose in learning. If students perceive purpose, they accept reasons for attaining vital objectives in the English curriculum. Each objective needs to be chosen carefully. Objectives selected must be vital and significant. The insiginificant and irrelevant must be omitted. The English instructor needs to assist students to perceive value in goal attainment. This can be achieved in several ways. Thus, the English instructor may utilize a deductive approach. With deduction, the instructor explains to students the worth of acquiring vital facts, concepts, and generalizations to be presented in the oncoming lesson presentation. The English instructor, clearly and concisely, clarifies to learners reasons for studying content

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currently being presented. Students should then put forth effort in achieving worth while subject matter in the English curriculum. An inductive procedure to develop student perceived purpose may also be utilized. Here, the instructor raises questions to have students discover reasons for learning.

John Dewey [2] wrote:

> Method is a statement of the way the subject matter of an experience develops most effectively and fruitfully. It is derived, accordingly, from observation of the course of experiences where there is no conscious distinction of personal attitude and manner from material dealt with. The assumption that method is something separate is connected with the notion of the isolation of mind and self from the world of things. It makes instruction and learning formal, mechanical, constrained. While methods are individualized, certain features of the normal course of an experience to its fruition may be discriminated because of the fund of wisdom derived from prior experiences and because of general similarities in the materials dealt with from time to time. Expressed in terms of the attitude of the individual the traits of good method are straightforwardness, flexible intellectual interest or open-minded will to learn, integrity of purpose, and acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of one's activity including thought.

Interesting Subject Matter

Students need to be interested in acquiring vital English content. To establish interest in student learning, the instructor must utilize a variety of learning opportunities in ongoing lessons. Thus, lectures, discussions, audio- visual materials, student reports, consultants, and problem solving experiences should be in the offing for students. Variety in student activities provides for diverse learning styles. Each student has one or more preferred methods of learning. Implementing student preferences in ongoing activities assists students to achieve more than would normally be the case.

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Meaningful Subject Matter

The English instructor should guide each student to attach meaning to facts, concepts, and generalizations in ongoing lessons and units. Clear explanations, use of many examples, student questions of content lacking clarity, and quality order of ideas presented should guide learners to understand subject matter presented. Meaningful subject matter makes for content that English students can understand. Subject matter that has meaning can be utilized in new situations, be it in problem solving or pure contemplation. Useful content is retained better than that which can not be utilized.

Quality Attitudes

English instructors should assist students to achieve positive attitudes toward inherent subject matter. With quality attitudes, learners may achieve more optimally. Attitudinal goals must receive adequate emphasis in teaching-learning situations. Achieving attitudinal goals assists students to attain knowledge and skills ends more effectively. Attitudes pertain to feelings, values, beliefs, and affect that English students have toward the curriculum. Duffy and Roehler [3] wrote:

> Teachers make a differences. This is not a wishful statement or hopeful rhetoric. It is a fact established by more than 20 years of painstaking research, which shows that when teachers do certain things they produce higher achievement; when they do not do these things, they produce less achievement. Being an instructionally effective teacher, however, is not easy. Teaching is extremely demanding, and the constraints and realities of classroom life often cause teachers to favor mechanical instruction, which, although less effective in producing reading achievement, is easier and makes classroom life more manageable.

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Psychology of Teaching English

English instructors need to possess a definite psychology in teaching to assist university students to achieve optimally. Behaviorism, as one psychology of learning may be emphasized.

With behaviorism, the English instructor selects measurably stated objectives for student attainment. These objectives are precise and leave little or no room for interpretation in terms of what English students are to learn as a result of instruction. Relevant content needs to be inherent in each objective. After instruction through measurement procedures, the English student has or has not attained the desired end. If the student has been unsuccessful in goal attainment, a different teaching strategy should follow. Criterion referenced tests are generally utilized to measure if students have been successful in achieving the specific objectives. Criterion referenced tests are valid in that they measure that which is contained in each objective. Validity in testing is then in evidence. It is appropriate if English teachers also determine if their tests are reliable, be it alternative forms, split-half, or test-retest reliability.

In summary, behaviorism as a psychology of education emphasizes

1. precise objectives of instruction.
2. learning opportunities which align with the objectives. Validity is then in evidence.
3. evaluative techniques that determine how much students have learned as a result of instruction.
4. each technique of evaluation directly harmonizes with the objectives of instruction, further emphasizing the concept of validity.
5. test results which reflect accountability of the English instructor.

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Pertaining to B.F. Skinner and S.J. Pressey and their psychology of behaviorism, Ozmon and Craver [4] wrote:

> Other more sophisticated teaching machines and computers are designed primarily for adults. One machine has a large amount of material on microfilm that the student must read. After reading the material, the student is asked to choose one of several possible answers. If the correct answer is chosen, one goes on to the next frame. If the wrong answer is chosen, however, there are two contrasting views about what should happen. Skinner thinks that to make the student repeat the materials is too much punishment, and if one misses the answer the maching should still go on to the next frame. Other behaviorists, such as S. J. Pressey, maintain that repeating the material is not too much punishment and that the student should get the right answer before the machine moves to the next frame. This process is made as painless as possible in some machines, and if the student presses the wrong button, the machine will go to a frame that tells why the wrong answer was selected and then refer back to the teaching material to be reread.
>
> Some teaching machines are also "branching" machines; that is, they contain programs for average, slow, and bright students. A student who completes exercises one through ten without making a mistake may be able to jump the next ten lessons because they are repetitious. A student who makes a single mistake will have to do the next ten, and one who makes two mistakes may be referred to a remedial program before beginning at lesson one again.

A second psychology which is humanism may be stressed in teaching-learning by the English instructor. With humanism, heavy input from English students in the curriculum is wanted. There are numerous approaches that may well be emphasized. Thus the English instructor encourages students to raise many questions in ongoing presentations. He/she intrinsically is interested in questions and problems identified by English students. The instructor also asks frequent questions of students within lesson presentations. Further means of emphasizing humanistic psychology include

1. using instructor-student planning of the English course.

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2. having English students select a term project to complete.
3. modifying objectives of the course to reflect learner interest.
4. bringing learners into the evaluation process.
5. emphasizing problem solving as a process in the English curriculum.

Humanism is strong in emphasizing learner interests, purposes, and meaning. The English instructor then in following tenets of humanism needs to encourage students to participate actively in the curriculum and not be passive recipients in teaching--learning situations. Students must ask questions, respond to questions, deliberate, think creatively and critically, and be proficient problem solvers when humanism becomes the dominant psychology. Student-instructor planning of the English curriculum in terms of objectives, learning opportunities, and appraisal is the heart of humanism as a psychology.

The writer recommends strongly that adequate emphasis be placed upon problem solving methods of teaching English. Thus English students with instructor guidance identify problems, gather data from a variety of reference sources, develop related hypotheses, test each hypothesis, and revise the hypothesis as needed.

Sequence in the English class comes from the student in that he/she orders his/her knowledge, skills, and attitudes in each lesson presentation. A psychological curriculum is then in evidence.

Humanism emphasizes the student as the focal point of instruction. The student is the learner and needs to be heavily involved in having

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input into each lesson taught. The questions, comments, and choices of students is vital.

In Summary

The English instructor needs to emphasize

1. purposeful content in teaching students.
2. the interests of students in teaching-learning situations.
3. meaningful subject matter.
4. quality learner attitudes toward the English curriculum.

Two psychologies need emphasizing. These are

1. behaviorism with its precise, measurably stated objectives.
2. humanism with heavy emphasis placed upon student decision-making and choices in English classes.

The psychology/psychologies implemented in instruction should guide each student to attain optimally. Higher levels of cognition, such as critical and creative thinking, as well as problem solving need adequate emphasis in ongoing lessons and courses.

Pertaining to motivation in learning, Royer and Feldman [5] wrote:

> Motivation refers to the factors that drive and orient behavior toward a particular goal. In the context of education, the typical goal is academic success and achievement. One important aspect of teaching is to arouse motivation in students that is directed toward educational goals.
>
> The relationship between motivational arousal and performance success is related to the complexity of the task and is known as the Yerkes-Dodson law. Performance on simple tasks is best at relatively high levels of arousal, whereas complex tasks require relatively lower levels of arousal for optimum performance.
>
> Maslow has suggested a hierarchical, ordered set of needs to explain different levels of motivation. The five needs are: physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. A person can move toward higher-order needs only after the more basic needs are fulfilled. The highest level, self-actualization, is reached when individuals realize their potential and experience a sense of mastery or competence.

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